

[Private]

Greenfield, Kilgobbin
near Dublin, July 19. 1862

My dear Mr May

About ^{3 or 4} weeks ago I left home (for the first time for a long time) to visit an aged aunt in the County of Wexford, about 100 miles away, who had lately been at death's door. I left my dear wife ~~at home~~ in apparent good health, & we corresponded daily, as our custom has been when separated - but nothing that she wrote prepared me to find her ^{so} ~~in~~ ^{on} my return, suffering from ~~the attack~~ ^{an} attack of rheumatic fever. At first the attack was not severe enough to allow her to be persuaded to see a doctor, and when he ^{did call} ~~called~~ in a very skilful physician in the neighbourhood of the place he said that he regarded the rheumatism less than the imperfect pulsation of her heart, which is a dangerous concomitant of this fever. However, after about ten days she seemed to recover very well, & for one day she sat up in an arm chair & even walked a little about the room, as she said, to remove the stiffness which the attack had left. As she could not endure ^{idleness} ~~idleness~~ this impudence was followed by a relapse which again appeared to give way to the treatment that in her imbecility

be well she ~~had~~^{paid} ~~the~~^{Doctor} herself and
beseeched him not to come again for a while.
She remained away for two days when she
was again seized with pain—but with
entire prostration & difficulty of breathing
— weakness from the enfeebled heart,
and the difficult breathing from congestion
of the lungs. She sank from one day to
another and on the 16th of this month—just
three days ago, at 9 in the morning she
died in perfect peace, without sigh or
struggle, ~~in the 53rd year of her age.~~^{in the 53rd year of her age.} Words
could not express her extraordinary
goodness. Her sweetness of spirit, kindness,
gentleness, unselfishness, ~~kind~~^{open} hands, her
industry, richness of apprehension, literary
taste, utter absence of ostentation in her
disposition or habits, uniform courtesy to
all, purity of mind—in the combination of
these qualities I never knew her equal &
I could have said the same any time
within the 29 years of our married life,
as well as now that I feel overwhelmed
by the immensity of my loss. Every
body that knew her loved her & had
repeated her. I have had from Harriet
Martineau, Mary Anne Estlin and other
good people whom you do not know
beautiful testimony to her extraordinary

excellence - and if the sympathy of my
family friends could make up for what
I have lost, I would have nothing to ^{for} ~~wish~~ ^{for} Our
two daughters, ~~neither~~ of whom is strong,
nursed their mother for days together with
the proudest attention, refusing food or sleep, & the elder of the two has been ^{since} ~~long~~
pained to ^{see} ~~see~~ the results of our execution.
My two sons, also, have not spared themselves
in any way to make the blow less
heavy - so that I have ^{much} ~~much~~ to allay the
constantly recurring ~~anxiety~~ ^{anxiety} of this terrible
~~the~~ affliction.

When barely able to speak & labouring
with difficult breathing (you know how
distressing it must be) one of our girls
asked her how she felt; she replied "Don't
be uneasy. Our Father is known to know
what is best for us all. I am easy - quite
easy." - Another time she said "I see
that all is right - as if it were on paper."
She looked very sweet in death and ~~very~~
little changed. An ~~old~~ octogenarian sewing
woman, a sort of Calab. Baldestone, whom
she had kindly cared for during a severe
illness last winter, went up to the room
where she lay. ^{As} ~~he~~ ^{he} came down, his eyes
wet with tears, ~~but~~ ^{he} ~~he~~ said to me, "You
ought to be as happy as the day is long to

"See her lying there - ^{looking} ~~like~~ like an angel.

"any one would know she was happy."

"I have seen many couples, and I never

"saw the like before." - And there, as he walked down stairs he said, "Oh cruel Death! cruel death! cruel death!" Which incessantly on the watch to help others, her only fault was her inability to think for or she ought to have done of for herself. Her unselfishness was something unparalleled - & this will be readily testified by the friends on ~~the~~ your side of the Atlantic who have had the happiness to know her. As it is out of my power to write to them all, I ask your good offices to have this letter printed on a slip and sent to them Mrs Chapman, Miss Anne Weston, Mr L Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Parker Pillsbury, H. C. Wright, Matthew Griffith, James T. Smith, Sarah Park, Abby Kimball, J. M. McKim, ~~Edwards~~ ^{Frederick} Foster, Frederick Douglass, W. W. Brown, C. L. Remond, several friends, I. J. May & the widow of John Brown whom I ~~would~~^{wrote to} should know that the life of her noble husband to which my name is appended as editor, was mainly due to her dear wife's cooperation. I would also like one to be sent to Mrs. Child, Franklin Miller, Porter & Summit Co. Ohio. For the postage of the slips I will be your debtor. Please have each slip reached privately, as this is meant for publication.